

LETTERS

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OSPREYS INCUBATE GOOSE EGG TO HATCHING

Serial use of the same nest by Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) and Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) has increased in recent decades. Campbell et al. (1990, *The Birds of British Columbia*, Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria BC Canada) reported that 13% of the nesting Canada Geese utilized nests of Ospreys and Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in British Columbia. Because geese begin nesting earlier, Ospreys sometimes return to find their favored nesting site occupied by a pair of geese. Attempts to drive them from these nests vary in success (e.g., Flath 1972, *Auk* 89:446–447).

On 1 June 1995, while trapping adult Ospreys near the mouth of the Coeur d'Alene River in northern Idaho, I found a pair of Ospreys attending a nest containing an Osprey egg and a goose egg. I intended to leave the eggs undisturbed until I heard soft vocalizations and discovered that the goose egg was already pipped. Because there was no chance of its survival at the nest, I removed the gosling from the shell in the hope of releasing it into a brood on the Coeur d'Alene River Wildlife Management Area nearby. However, John Nigh, the area manager, informed me that most local broods hatched from 15 April–15 May which limited the opportunity to foster the bird. I was advised to euthanize it, a step I carried out with much regret. I am uncertain if the Osprey egg hatched; no birds were present when I returned in mid-July to band nestlings in the area.

I assume that a dispute over use of the nest occurred soon after Ospreys arrived from the south in late March or early April, before the geese had completed egg laying. A 1 June hatching date lagged behind that of most local clutches by 2–6 weeks, suggesting that the nest contained a single goose egg at the time Ospreys drove the geese off. The goose egg was not incubated until an Osprey egg was laid several weeks later when the incubation of both began. Alternate scenarios such as a delay in the initiation of egg laying or the reduction of a completed clutch to a single egg seem less likely.

Alteration of clutch size or differences in egg size or color apparently have little influence on incubation effort by Ospreys. Fannin (1894, *Auk* 11:322) found a pair of Ospreys incubating a mixed clutch of goose and Osprey eggs which they continued to incubate after he reduced the clutch to a single goose egg. Reese (1977, *Auk* 94:202–221) found Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) eggs in several clutches of Ospreys nesting in Maryland. In a cross-fostering experiment involving extensive replication, nesting Ospreys closely incubated 1–2 dummy Bald Eagle eggs for several weeks. All pairs later completed incubation of their clutches, which were maintained in an incubator during the experiment (E. Bizeau pers. comm.).

I thank Wendy and Jon Lawrence for field assistance. Tracy Fleming provided helpful comments on the manuscript and additional literature sources. The suggestions of C.J. Henny and an anonymous reviewer also improved the manuscript.—**Donald R. Johnson, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844 U.S.A.**

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SWAINSON'S HAWKS IN NUEVO LEÓN, MEXICO

In Mexico, the Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) is considered mostly a migratory species that nests mainly in the U.S. and Canada. Here, we report our observations of two Swainson's Hawk nests in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico.

Previously, Urban (1959, *Birds from Coahuila, Mexico*. Univ. Kansas Publ., Mus. Nat. Hist. 11(8):443–516) reported two Swainson's Hawks in western Coahuila, Mexico. The first specimen was collected on 20 June 1952, two miles west of Jimenez. Measuring the gonads to be 6 × 4 mm, Urban concluded the bird must have been breeding. The second individual was collected at Iglesias, 24 km southwest of Sabinas on 22 August 1949. Swainson's Hawks have also been

recorded breeding in the following states of Mexico: Baja California, Sonora, Durango and Chihuahua (Oberholser 1974, *The bird life of Texas*. Vol. I. Univ. Texas Press, Austin, TX U.S.A.; AOU 1998, *Check List of North American Birds*. 7th edition. Washington, DC U.S.A.); Coahuila and Baja California (Urbina-Torres and Morales-Gonzalez 1996, *Aves rapaces de Mexico*, Centro de Investigaciones Biologicas, U.A.E.M., Mexico); Nuevo León, Sonora through Chihuahua, Durango and Coahuila, and extreme northern Tamaulipas (Howell and Webb 1995, *A guide to the birds of Mexico and northern Central America*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, U.K.; England et al. 1997, Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). In *The Birds of North America*, A. Poole and F. Gill [Eds.]. The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, DC U.S.A.). We have previously reported the Swainson's Hawk primarily to be a migrant in our area that is vulnerable to deforestation for ranching (Contreras-Balderas et al. 1995, *Lista preliminar de las aves del estado de Nuevo León*. Capítulo 3:41–54; Contreras-Balderas 1997, pages 35–44 in R.W. Dickerman [Ed.], *Resumen avifaunístico de Nuevo León*. The era of Allan R. Phillips. A Festschrift. Horizon Communications, Albuquerque, NM U.S.A.)

We surveyed select trails in two areas in the northcentral part of Nuevo León, Mexico from January–September 1996. One area was near the municipality of Pesqueria (22.5 km northeast of Monterrey; 25°47'N, 100°06'W). Vegetation in the area included *Bumelia spiniflora*, *Prosopis glandulosa*, *Acacia farnesiana*, and various species of sedges (*Bouteloua* spp.). The second area was near China (93.7 km southeast of Monterrey; 25°39'30"N, 99°20'15"W). Vegetation in this area included *Bumelia spiniflora*, *Prosopis glandulosa*, *Acacia farnesiana*, *Acacia wrightii*, *Leucophyllum texanum*, *Jatropha dioica*, *Opuntia* spp., and various species of sedges (*Bouteloua* spp.), both in the Coastal Plain Gulf region among predominately high thorn brush. Both areas have a warm climate with an annual precipitation of 60–100 cm and median annual temperatures in Pesqueria and China of 22 and 18°C, respectively (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática 1981, *Síntesis geográfica de Nuevo León*. Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto, Nuevo León, Mexico).

We found two Swainson's Hawk nests in Nuevo León. The first, just east of Monterrey in Pesqueria, had the following chronology: on 10 January 1996, five adults arrived at the site; on 8 April, a pair remained in the area; on 21 April, the pair established its territory; on 14 May, nest construction was observed; on 23 May, two eggs were being incubated; on 13 June, two young were observed in nest; and on 1 July, the young fledged. The nest was in a *Prosopis glandulosa*, 6.90 m from the ground.

We found the second nest in the municipality of China on 27 July 1996. It contained one young. The nest was in a *Pithecellobium flexicaule*, 8.0 m above the ground. At both nests, the adults had typical light morph plumage.

Our findings confirm that Swainson's Hawks breed in Nuevo León, although they are probably not common. This increases the number of species that nest in the state while extending the southeasternmost boundary of the breeding range of the Swainson's Hawk 360 km.

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